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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Second Annual Organic Crops and Soils
Field Day: August 12**

By Anu Rangarajan

GENEVA, NY: Explore the organic field crop and livestock connection at the second annual Organic Crops and Soils Field Day, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on August 12. The morning session will be held at Jordan Hall, at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY. The afternoon session consists of a bus tour of three organic farms near Seneca and Cayuga lakes in New York's Finger Lakes Region.

Weed management, soil health, organic grain markets, regional composting, open pollinated corn varieties, and the beneficial connections between livestock and crop production will be the primary topics. Organic field crop and dairy/livestock farmers and researchers from the Finger Lakes and other areas will share their expertise in roundtable discussions, presentations, and farm field stops. There will also be a mini trade show.

Tom Frantzen, outstanding organic farmer from Alta Vista, Iowa will be the keynote speaker in the morning. "What we are managing with biology is pretty complex," said Frantzen on the New Farm online website (<http://www.newfarm.org/>). "Farming is vastly more complicated now than it was 20 years ago. Organic farming has given us a better quality of life, and should give us a more stable future in an unstable agricultural industry. I enjoy what I'm doing, and I enjoy the people I work with immensely."

Tom, Irene and James Frantzen's operation includes about 335 crop-acres, 75 beef cows, and 100 sows which they market through Organic Valley <<http://www.organicvalley.com/>>, a Wisconsin-based cooperative with more than 460 farmer-members in 17 states. The Frantzen farm has been organic since 1995.

The afternoon bus tour, with demonstrations on soil health, weed management, and other areas of interest to grain and livestock farmers, includes stops at:

- o Horst Farm Dairy, Penn Yan, NY. Edwin and Lucille Horst milk about 40 cows with 40 young stock. They rotationally graze 80 acres of pasture and harvest about 100 acres of hay plus a small acreage of corn grain.
- o Myer Farm, Ovid, NY. John and Mary Jo Myer have been managing land organically for over 20 years and were pioneers in the move to organic grains in the Finger Lakes. The Myers grows a mix of hay, tofu soybeans, small grains, and corn on 880 acres, with seed/bean cleaning and a small beef herd as side operations.
- o Farm of John and Chris Saeli, Fayette, NY. The Saelis manage 270 acres organically and are currently



Suggested caption: Klaas Marten, organic farmer in Penn Yan, NY, explains the benefits of using a cultivator for weed control at the 2002 Organic Crops and Soils Field Day. CREDIT: PHOTO PROVIDED.

transitioning more acreage. They grow soybeans, corn, hay and pea-grain feed mixes.

This field day is sponsored by New York Certified Organic (NYCO), the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY), the NorthEast Organic Network (NEON), and Cornell Cooperative Extension. New York Certified Organic (NYCO) is an organization of organic grain and dairy farmers in Central and Western NY. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) has 1200 farmer and consumer members who support and promote organic farming in New York State. The Northeast Organic Network seeks to enhance research, extension and education in organic cropping systems in the Northeast U.S. <www.neon.cornell.edu>.

Lunch will be served on the busses, and additional presentations will also take place on the busses, which will return to Jordan Hall by 6 p.m. Pre-registration and payment are required. Fee is \$25 per person; \$15 per person for additional participants from the same farm. Contact Maxine Welcome at 607-255-5439, or mw45@cornell.edu for more information.

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